

# Google Chat Retention Policy

Policy Last modified: November 18, 2020

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Our Google Chat retention policy aims to reduce redundant, obsolete, and trivial information in corporate chats. By helping us all focus on our most meaningful and useful messages, we can reduce time spent sifting through irrelevant old messages and reduce storage costs.

## Retention Periods

- **24 hours** if history is off
- **30 days** for history-on chats with just one other person
- Currently **18 months** for history-on chats in a group conversation or flat (non-threaded) room
  - Exception: 30 days if the history-on flat room was created from within classic Hangouts before 11/18/20
  - **Please be aware:** You may have noticed that your group chats created in classic Hangouts are also reflected as flat rooms in Google Chat (and vice versa). Historically, both had a retention period of 30 days. The current 18-month retention of flat rooms is a technical interim step and will be brought back to the initial **30 days** earliest H1 2021 (we'll be sure to announce when this is happening!). If you need 18-month-long retention, please consider a threaded room instead.
- **18 months** for chats in a threaded room (history is always on and can't be turned off)

**NOTE:** Turning history "on" or "off" applies only to messages sent after that change. For example, if you send or receive messages while history is "off" and then you turn it "on," the pre-existing messages will only be retained for 24 hours.

**NOTE:** Once a chat's retention period expires and it's removed from your view, it can't be recovered back into your view.

## Business Records

If your role involves data that is potentially subject to different or longer retention periods (for example, private user data or tax records), consider taking information like this off of Chat into Gmail ([Gmail Retention Policy](#)), Google Docs, or another storage system. If you aren't sure whether the data you're handling should be stored outside of Chat for a different retention period, reach out to your manager or product counsel ([go/whichlawyer](#)).

Otherwise, feel free to reach out to us at [records-retention@google.com](mailto:records-retention@google.com) for more general data retention questions.

## Legal Holds

**CONFIDENTIAL**

**EXHIBIT 1**

**CONFIDENTIAL**

If you've been notified that you're subject to a "legal hold": To comply with our preservation obligations, your Google Chats described below will be preserved automatically (all retention periods are paused) while the relevant matter is pending. Still, don't manually delete any chats relevant to the matter at issue under any circumstances.

- On-the-record 1:1s, Group DMs, and Flat Rooms you've sent or received
- Threaded Rooms conversations in which you've participated (i.e., sent a message, not just received)

Once all applicable legal holds have been lifted, the retention periods will take effect again and remove expired messages.

## Policy Scope

This policy applies to corporate Google Chat only. It applies to all employees and our extended workforce (temporary workers/vendors/contractors) across Alphabet (minus Calico and Sidewalk Labs).

## Approvals & Changes

This policy periodically will be reviewed by Google Legal to ensure alignment and compliance with our legal and regulatory obligations. Any changes to this retention policy will be approved by Google Legal.

## Questions/Feedback

If you have any questions about this policy, you can send us an email at [records-retention@google.com](mailto:records-retention@google.com).

Chat Retention FAQs

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